

Oak Grove Church of Christ Newsletter – 2026.01.25

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No services on 1/25/26 due to inclement weather

Articles

Do we have eternal life permanently? 1/24/2026 by Terry Wane Benton

We have eternal life in promise. Just as formerly, we had eternal condemnation in promise. The promise of eternal damnation is to the unbeliever who can change their destiny by belief and repentance. Change your destiny by changing your direction and heart. “And for this cause he is the mediator of a new covenant, that a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance” (Hebrews 9:15). We have the eternal inheritance in promise. It hasn’t become our reality yet.

In the same way, eternal destruction is the promise to the unbeliever. He hasn’t experienced it yet, but that is the direction he is going, and unless he changes his mind and direction, he is under eternal condemnation.

Can he change directions? Yes! Likewise, a believer can change directions. Hebrews 3:12 says to take heed lest you develop an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. Here is a person with the promise of eternal life changing directions to the promise of eternal condemnation.

So, “eternal” life does not mean you automatically keep it forever, but that under the terms of the covenant, it is yours by promise, and under the terms of unbelief, “eternal condemnation” is yours by promise, but in either case, you can forfeit the promise.

“And this is the promise which he promised us, even the life eternal” (I John 2:25). It is not a “promise” if it is an actual possession that cannot be forfeited. If we have it in possession instead of promise, then hope is no longer hope since hope has been realized (Romans 8:24f). If we have eternal life in actual possession, then we are not hoping for immortality. But if it is ours in promise and hope, then we can lose that hope by forfeiting the terms and conditions that give that promise and hope. That would be like selling your birthright for a mess of pottage like Esau. Giving up everlasting life for the temporal is certainly a foolish trade.

Don't Be Surprised by Suffering, 1/22/ 2026 by Edwin Crozier

Text: I Peter 4

Jesus told the apostles: "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours" (John 15:18-20 ESV).

Building on this same principle, Peter says to us: "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed" (I Peter 4: 12-13 ESV).

Our King suffered. His citizens will also suffer. The same kinds of people who rejected Jesus and killed Him will reject and persecute us. The same kinds of people who listened to and supported Jesus will listen to and support us.

Regrettably, some people give their allegiance to Jesus lightly. They give allegiance to Jesus expecting Him to pave an easy path through this life for them. But that was never the plan. These are the seed sown on rocky ground in Jesus's Parable of the Sower (see Matthew 13:5, 20-21). They do not develop roots. They make a big show at the beginning, seeming to get mature quickly. But maturity is not tested in ease and pleasantries. It is tested in persecution and adversity.

Let us remove the rocks and weeds from the soil of our heart so the roots of our conviction in Jesus as King and His Word can grow deep. Then when the scorching sun withers us, we continue to live because more of us lives in the depths of conviction than can be seen on the surface.

Let us not be surprised when we suffer. Further, let us not be ashamed as if we are doing something wrong (unless we are, in fact, doing something wrong—see I Peter 4:15). Instead, let us glorify God. When we suffer as Christians, we are blessed (see Matthew 5:10-12) and the Spirit of glory and God rests upon us.

Praise the Lord!

